

VZCZCXRO6182
RR RUEHAG
DE RUEHUB #5860 2212019
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 092019Z AUG 06
FM USINT HAVANA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3109
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES
RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L HAVANA 015860

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE DEPT FOR WHA/CCA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/09/2016

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [SOCI](#) [CU](#)

SUBJECT: CUBAN ACTIVISTS MOURN DEATH OF GUSTAVO ARCOS

Classified By: COM Michael Parmly for Reason 1.4(d).

11. (C) Cuban pro-democracy activists on August 9 mourned as Gustavo Arcos, grandfather of the island's human rights movement, was cremated in Havana. Arcos died the previous day at a hospital after battling a number of ailments, including Alzheimers. According to his widow, his dying wish was the unification of Cuba's internal opposition, and the opposition's unification with the Cuban exile community. Activist Martha Beatriz Roque told us August 9 she planned a mass for Arcos, a devout Catholic, on or about August 16. The mass is likely to bring together a Who's Who of the Cuban human rights crowd, as well as members of the diplomatic community.

12. (SBU) Contacts report to us that in the southern city of Manzanillo, not far from Arcos' birthplace, black ribbons appeared and nine days of mourning began. Arcos fought alongside Fidel and Raul Castro from the early days of the Cuban revolution and ended up serving as a diplomat to Belgium before resigning in 1964, disillusioned with Fidel's Communist path. After breaking with the regime, he was sentenced to 10 years for acts against the state security. Once freed, he continued to push for respect for human rights, at a time when there were no other activists. USINT's last contact was on July 20, when Arcos' wife called us from the hospital and complained that the hospital staff was "treating us terribly, like I have an old car with no tires." Arcos was 79.
PARMLY